

7/1/90

The CIA and the White House sponsored assassinations and drug trafficking, alleged by Costa Rica. Also Cuban exiles.

The attached Washington Post story, 2/1/90, is important while being incomplete, inadequate and in large part delayed. It and more could have been published earlier, which makes me wonder why it decided to do the story when it did.

I follow radio and TV newscasts often enough to be certain that if this matter got any attention, it was not much and not on any major newscasts.

Connecting the White House, the CIA and Cuban exiles with the attempted assassination and the many serious injuries, including murder, is only implicit in this signed story, in which opinion and interpretation is not irregular or improper. The Post did not tell its readers what is implicit and it carried no editorial or oped page piece.

At the time of the attempted assassination of the fellow contra, Commander Zero, Eden Pastore, the CIA, supposedly, was officially out of the assassination business. This also is omitted from the story.

While Tony Avirgan is at the very end identified as a reporter investigating the crime it does not identify him as what he was, a victim of it and one on whose behalf the Christic Institute filed the suit referred to. My recollection of the Miami judge's decision referred to in the last paragraph, while not at all complete, is clear that the judge gave other reasons than the alleged lack of proof that Amac Galil, not identified in the story in any way, for dismissing the suit. Another reason was the serious defects and inaccuracies in the affidavit filed by the unnamed head of the Christic Institute, Daniel P. Sheehan. I note that long before the decision I had and read a copy of that affidavit, which alleges an enormous conspiracy that included the assassination of President Kennedy, was not accurate, as I wrote ~~Sheehan~~ Sheehan. This is really an understatement. It was full of the trash of the conspiracy theorists and was devoid of dependable information relating to the JFK assassination. Sheehan and those working with him drew on only the conspiracy theorists and their conjectures and fabrications. He was silent after he got my letter, as he had been on a number of other occasions when common politeness required some response. The file on Christic reflects this. Whatever the prospects of the suit he filed may have been, he eliminated them with that affidavit and he portrayed himself as irresponsible. His affidavit in the areas I indicate also was not based on personal knowledge that as a lawyer he should have known is required of testimony.

The press had long connected John Hull with the CIA and the Reagan White House. Costa Rica has now done that in an official proceeding.

If and when Costa Rica make a formal effort to extradict Hull, I believe that one way or another it will be frustrated and that whatever the reasons then given are, the real reason will be to prevent the presentation in a formal, official proceeding of the evidence that along with the Cuban exiles and their Contras the Reagan White House and the CIA were responsible for the attempted assassination and for the murders and many injuries in the La Penca bombing. Hull also jumped bail. I don't know if that is extraditable.

The actual crime was in Nicaragua. There is no statute of limitation on murder here and if that is true, then in the future Nicaragua can initiate a prosecution if it has what prosecution requires, evidence.

The story mentioned Robert Owen, who was one of Oliver North's operatives and thus the White House's (he also worked for State under contract). When he testified before the Iran/Contra committee Owen testified that once North sent him to confer with people in Colorado. Among those he named is Robert K. Brown. Today Brown is best known as the publisher of Soldier Of Fortune Magazine. He probably did more than any other one person to prepare readers of his earlier publications for crimes of violence and terrorism than any American. As a captain in the Army reserve he was asked to assassinate JFK and all of ADA and if I remember also Jews by a wealthy Arab-American. Brown failed to report this to any authority, He was instead promoted to major. The committee ignored the foregoing. I have it in my Brown file, including the FBI's reports.

Costa Rica Considers Seeking

Indiana Native Wanted on Murder Charge in

2/1/90
By Peter Brennan
Special to The Washington Post

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, Jan. 31—In a case that could prove embarrassing for both the U.S. and Costa Rican governments, local courts are considering seeking the extradition of John Hull, a supporter of the Nicaraguan contras and alleged CIA operative who fled Costa Rica for his native Indiana last year.

A Costa Rican prosecutor recently recommended that Hull, 69, a dual Costa Rican-U.S. citizen, be charged with first-degree murder for the 1984 bombing at a press conference in a Nicaraguan hamlet called La Penca, located across the San Juan River from Costa Rica.

The bomb, planted by an assassin posing as a journalist, only wounded its intended target, rebel leader Eden Pastora, but killed three journalists and at least one Nicaraguan rebel and wounded dozens. The report identified the assassin as Amac Galil. His whereabouts are unknown.

Based on the first substantive investigation by a Costa Rican agency into the bombing, the report links contras, narcotics traffickers of various nationalities, then-Panamanian strongman Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, former lieutenant colonel Oliver North, Cuban-American exiles and Costa Rican officials.

Pastora, who won fame in the Sandinista revolution as "Commander Zero," left the Nicaraguan government to mount an insurgency in the early 1980s from Costa Rica.

Prosecutor Jorge Chavarria charged that because Pastora refused to coordinate his forces with contras based in Honduras or to cooperate with drug traffickers using rebel arms pipelines to run cocaine through northern Costa Rica, a conspiracy to murder him mush-

roomed—led by Hull and Cuban exile Felipe Vidal. Vidal also has not been located.

Costa Rican authorities arrested Hull a year ago on charges of drug trafficking and neutrality violations for his support of the contras. While free on \$36,000 bail, Hull, who had lived in northern Costa Rica for more than 20 years, fled this country, claiming health problems.

The charges of drug trafficking were dropped after Hull fled. This made extradition on the neutrality charge difficult under the 1922 treaty in effect, said local lawyers. But the latest accusation of first-degree murder has brought renewed pressure on the country's highly respected judicial system to seek Hull's extradition.

"I think they have to do it," said Roberto Cruz, a Costa Rican journalist who lost an eye and a leg in the 1984 bombing. "If they don't try to extradite John Hull, Costa Rica won't be a real republic."

Costa Rica's normally conservative newspaper La Nacion demanded in an editorial that the courts follow up this case because there is "an imperative need for justice in this crime."

A letter praising the prosecutor's report was sent to Chavarria by the Journalists' Association, the Foreign Journalists' Association and a committee of La Penca victims. The letter encouraged the prosecutor to push for more cooperation from the U.S. judiciary, despite Washington's "negative attitude."

Republican Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana said here recently that he has heard about the recent charges against Hull, but that extradition "depends on Costa Rica making formal charges."

A local prosecutor in Hull's former Costa Rican province of San Carlos has asked a judge to seek extradition. It will be a long process that could be halted anywhere as it

Contras Backer in U.S.

1984 Bomb Attack on Eden Pastora

winds its way through the judiciary and Foreign Ministry before going to the United States.

Once a prominent supporter of the contras, Hull worked with North through courier Robert Owen to construct a rebel force on Nicaragua's southern front. If he were brought back, it could prove embarrassing to officials in both countries.

The report stated that Hull was a CIA operative with close ties to the U.S. Embassy and Costa Rican officials. It quoted testimony that before the La Penta bombing, Hull told a variety of people, including the then-vice minister of police, that there was a "need to eliminate" Pastora.

The night of the 1984 bombing, said the prosecutor, Hull called an associate and ordered him not to offer any help to the victims, according to the report.

During a telephone interview from Indiana, Hull denied the murder charges and charged that the Costa Rican judiciary is full of "communists."

Deane Hinton, who was ambassador here and now is in Panama, called the recent report "an invention."

Chavarria emphasized that the report is a preliminary investigation. A panel of three judges is reviewing the report, which is based on 7,000 documents from, among other places, the Iran-contra hearings and related trials and a U.S. Senate subcommittee's investigation into drug trafficking.

The report recommended that 23 persons be charged with neutrality violations, including military trainer Thomas Posey and North's courier, Owen.

North was not charged, but he is officially declared not welcome in Costa Rica, the most stable democracy in Central America.

Last July, a Legislative Assembly commission investigating trafficking recommended that North, arms dealer Richard Secord, former national security adviser John Poindexter, former ambassador Lewis Tambs and former CIA station chief in Costa Rica Joe Fernandez should be declared *personae non gratae* in Costa Rica.

These five, said the commission were responsible for building the arms network, which because of its cloak of secrecy, allowed traffickers to run cocaine to the United States.

The recent prosecutor's report enlarges the findings of American journalists Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan, who probed the bombing in 1984 and 1985. Hull sued the husband-and-wife investigative team in a Costa Rican court for libel, but lost.

The Christic Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based public law firm, took on the couple's investigation and sued Hull and 28 others over the La Penta bombing.

A Miami judge threw the suit out of court in 1988, a few days before the trial was to begin, declaring it was never proven that Gail was the bomber.